

Clip de la Chaise

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Father La Chaise's PROJECT
FOR THE
EXTIRPATION
OF
HERETICKS.



In a Letter from him to Father *Peters*.

Worthy Friend,

I Receiv'd yours of the 20th of *June* last, and am very glad to hear of your good Success, and that our Party gains Ground so fast in *England*. But concerning the Question you have put to me, that is, What is the best course to be taken to Root out all the *Hereticks*? To which, I answer: There are divers ways to do that, but we must consider which is the best to make use of in *England*, I am sure you are not ignorant how many thousand *Hereticks* we have in *France*, by the Power of our *Dragoons*, Converted in the space of one year; and by the Doctrine of those *booted Apostles*, Turn'd more in one month than *Christ* and his *Apostles* could in ten years. This is a most Excellent Method, and far excels those of the great Preachers and Teachers, that have lived since *Christ's* time. But I have spoke with divers Fathers of our Society, who do think that your King is not strong enough to accomplish his Design by such kind of force, so that we cannot expect to have our Work done in that manner, for the *Hereticks* are too strong in the three Kingdoms, and therefore we must seek to Convert them by fair means, before we fall upon them with Fire, Sword, Halters, Gaols, and other such like Punishments: And therefore, I can give you no better Advice than to begin with soft easie means, wheedle them in by Promises of Profit, and Offices of Honour, till you have made

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made them do themselves in Reasonable Actions, against the Laws Establiſhed, and then they are bound to ſerve for fear. When they have done thus, turn them out, and ſerve others ſo, by putting them in their Places; and by this way, gain as many as you can. And for the *Hereticks*, that are in Places of Profit and Honour, turn them out, or Suspend them on pretence of *Misbehaviour*, by which their Places are forfeit, and they ſubject to what Judgment you pleaſe to give upon them. Then you muſt form a *Camp*, that muſt conſiſt of none but *Catholicks*, this will make the *Hereticks* heartleſs, and conclude all means of Relief and Recovery is gone. And laſtly, take the ſhort and the beſt way, which is to ſurprize the *Hereticks* on a ſudden; and to encourage the *Zealous Catholicks*, let them *Sacrifice them all, and waſh their Hands in their Blood*, which will be an acceptable Offering to God. And this was the Method I took in *France*, which hath well, you ſee, ſucceeded, But it coſt me many threats and promiſes, be- for I could bring it thus far, our *King* being a long time very unwilling.

But at laſt, I got him on the Hip, for he had *lawn* with his *Daughter-in-Law*, for which I would by no means give him *Absolution*, till he had given me an *Instrument*, under his own Hand and Seal, to *Sacrifice* all the *Hereticks* in one day. Now as ſoon as I had my *deſired Commiſſion*, I appointed the day when this ſhould be done, and in the mean time, made ready ſome thouſands of Letters, to be ſent into all parts of *France* in one Poſt Night. I was never better pleaſed than that time, but the *King* was affected with ſome compaſſion for the *Hugonots*, becauſe they had been a means to bring him to his Crown and Throne; and the longer he was under it the more ſorrowful he was, often complaining, and deſiring me to give him his *Commiffion* again, but that I would by no perſwaſion do, advising him to repent of that heinous ſin; and alſo telling him, that the trouble and horſour of his Spirit did not proceed from any thing of Evil in thoſe things that were to be done, but from that great Wickedneſs which he had done; and that he muſt reſolve to undergo the ſevere burthen of a troubled mind for one of them or the other, and if he would remain ſatisfied as it was, his Sin being forgiven, there would, in few days, be a perfect attonement made for it, and he perfectly reconciled to God again. But all this would not pacifie him, for the longer the more reſtleſs, and therefore I ordered him to retire to his Cloſet, and there ſpend his time conſtantly in Prayer, without permitting any one to interrupt him; and this was in the morning early, when the evening following I was to ſend away all my Letters. I did indeed make the more haſte, for fear he ſhould diſcloſe it to any body, yet I had given him a ſtrict charge to keep it to himſelf, and the very thing that I moſt feared, to my great ſorrow, came to paſs; for juſt in the nick of time, the *Devil*, who hath always his *Inſtruments* at work, ſent the *Prince of Conde* to the Court, who asked for the *King*; he was told that he was in his Cloſet, and would ſpeak with no man; he impudently answered, *That he muſt, and would ſpeak with him*, and ſo

So went directly to his Closet; he being a great Peer, no man durst hinder him. And being come to the King, he soon perceived by his countenance that he was under some great trouble of mind, for he looked as if he had been going into the other World immediately. Sir, said he, what is the matter with you? The King, at the first, refused to tell him, but he pressing harder upon him, at last, the King with a sorrowful complaint, burst out, and said, *I have given Fauchon a Chaise a Commission under my own Hand, to Murder all the Hugonots in the day, and this Evening will the Letters be dispatched to all Parts, by the Post, for the performing it; so that there is but small time left for my Hugonot Subjects to live, who have never done me any harm: Whereupon this cursed Rogue answered, Let him give you your Commission again: The King said, how shall I get it out of his hand, for if I send to him for it, he will refuse to send it?* This Devil answered, *If your Majesty will give me order, I will quickly make him return it:* The King was soon persuaded, being willing to give ease to his troubled Spirit, and said, *Well, go then, and break his Neck, if he will not give it you;* whereupon, this Son of the Devil, went to the Post-House, and asked if I had not a great number of Letters there, and they said, *Yes, more than I had sent thither in a whole year before;* then, said the Prince, *By Order from the King, you must deliver them all to me;* which they durst not deny, for they knew well enough who he was. And no sooner was he got into the Post-House, and had asked these Questions, but I came also in after him, to give order to the Post-Master, to give notice to all those under him, in the several Parts of the Kingdom, that they should take care to deliver my Letters with all speed imaginable. But I was no sooner entred the House, but he gave his Servants order to secure the Door, and said confidently to me, *You must, by order from the King, give me the Commission which you have forced from him:* I told him I had it not about me, but would go and fetch it, thinking to get from him, and so go out of Town, and send the contents of those Letters another time; but he said, *You must give it me, and if you have it not about you, send some body to fetch it, or else never expect to go alive out of my hands, for I have an Order from the King, either to bring it or break your Neck: And I am resolved either to carry back that to him in my hand, or your Hearts Blood on the point of my Sword.* I would have made my escape, but he set his Sword to my Breast, and said, *You must give it me or dye, therefore deliver it, or else this goes through your Body.*

So when I saw nothing else would do, I put my Hand in my Pocket and gave it him, which he carried immediately to the King, and gave him that and all my Letters, which they burnt: And being all done, the King said, *Now his Heart was at ease; now how he should be eased by the Devil, or so well satisfied with a false Joy I cannot tell:* But this I know, that it was a very Wicked and Ungodly action, as well in his Majesty as the Prince of Conde, and did not a little increase the burthen and danger of His Majesties Sins. I soon gave an account of this Affair to several

Fathers

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Fathers of our Society, who promised to do their best to prevent the said *Prince* doing such another act, which was accordingly done, for within the space of six days after the damned action he was *Poisoned*, and well he deserved it. The *King* also did suffer too, but in another fashion, for disclosing the Design to the *Prince*, and hearkning to his Counsel. And many a time since, when I have had him at Confession, I have shook Hell about his Ears; and made him sigh, fear, and tremble, before I would give him Absolution; nay, more than that, I have made him beg for it on his Knees, before I would consent to Absolve him. By this, I saw that he had still an Inclination to me, and was willing to be under my government, so I set the baseness of the action before him, by telling the whole Story, and how wicked it was; and that it could not be forgiven till he had done some good action to ballance that, and expiate the Crime. Whereupon, he at last asked me what he must do? I told him, that he must root out all the *Hereticks* from his Kingdom: So, when he saw there was no rest for him without doing it, he did again give them all into the power of me and our *Clergy*, under this condition, *That we would not Murder them*, as he had before given orders, but that we should by fair means, or force, Convert them to the *Catholick Religion*; to which end, he gave us his *Dragoons* to be at our Devotion and Service, that we might use them as we saw convenient, to Convert them to the true Religion. Now when we had got the Commission, we presently put it in Practice, and what the issue of it hath been, you very well know. But now in *England*, the work cannot be done after this manner, as you may perceive by what I have said to you, so that I cannot give you better counsel, than to take that course in hand wherein we were so unhappily prevented; and I doubt not, but that it may have better success with you than with us.

I would write to you of many other things, but that I fear I have already detained you too long; wherefore I shall write no more at present, but that I am,

Paris, July 8th:
1688.

Your Friend and Servant,



La Chaise.

